Dear Mr. Weisberg, 22 Jan 1976

I'll write to Peter Calvocoressi right away. As soon as I receive it from you I'll airmail a copy of "Post-Mortem" to him; direct. Enclosed, please find my check for an insured copy of "Post Mortem".

I must repeat: I can guarantee nothing - but he is the only person I know in the book publishing industry. The enclosed copy of The Sunday Times article may be helpful in obtaining a slight impression of him - in addition to the few words I wrote about him. It certainly is well worth a try; I'm delighted that you have OKed the attempt.

I hope the "...further writing." you mention means that "Tiger to Ride" will be available reasonably soon. What is needed is the proof that Kennedy was attempting to change from the imperial foreign policy(s) that were ongoing in 1960 to more viable alternatives. And that his determined new policy(s) occasioned his murder by conspiracy - no matter at what level. I'm certain that "Tiger to Ride" will be a very important work.

I am distressed to hear of your great discomforture from the phlebitis.

I'll write to you to let you know that my letter and your book have been sent.

Till then, with my best to you and Mrs. Weisberg, I remain

Sincerely,

James Steen Jr.

James C. Steen, Jr.
16 Princeton Avenue
Swarthmore, Pa. 19081

P.S. I also enclose three letters of Peter Calvocoressi's published, as dated, in The Times.

THE SUNDAY TIMES, MARCH 4 1973

PETER CALVOCORESSI, Penguin's new Publisher and Chief Executive, is an unknown quantity to most of those who buy his books. What does he bring to a national institution with a great social responsibility?

PRACTICAL IDEALIST

Kevin Brodie

UNDER dark, greying, ruffled hair, with a quick smile and a voice at once soft and emphatic, Peter Calvocoressi takes off his spectacles and gazes thoughtfully into space.

"I was lucky, I had a good start in life—Eton and Oxford; then law, company law in fact, though alas I was too young to profit much from that extremely profitable activity. Still, I'm not quite an innocent in business affairs. After the war, and taking part in the Nuremberg trials, I went back to the law, but I didn't like it.

"In fact—and I think it'll stand me in good stead now—I've never stuck to one thing. I suppose I have specialised in foreign affairs and international law, working at Chatham House and teaching at the University of Sussex. But then I've given quite a bit of time to race relations, and African affairs and Amnesty International.

"But this has been only part of my life. Equally important to me is my home and family. When I'm in London I work; when I'm at home in the country I don't. And then there's music, an absolutely essential part of my life. When I was a boy the teaching, or anyway my teaching, was so awful that it killed any idea of playing; but listening to music, exploring new areas—after the first Viennese schools on to the second—that's vital to me.

"In fact I love learning about things—and come to that I love teaching. I don't make any kind of cult of youth, but I do find a tremendous stimulus in people half my age. And another thing—I adore writing, I mean the act of sitting down in front of a sheet of paper; for me there's a real physical pleasure in intellectual work, just as much as in, say, tennis, which I'm also very fond of. So I've published eleven books.

"And I'm not quite an innocent in publishing either. For ten years I was a full-time working director of Chatto & Windus. I don't suppose I was an ideal editor, as publishers' editors seem to go nowadays, because I thought, and think, that the author should write the book himself. But I certainly didn't play at publishing.

"WELL, but if I left publishing in 1965, why did I come back to it, as Penguin's Editorial Director, last year, at the age of 59? I certainly wouldn't have come back to any publishing work which I didn't regard as rather special. But when you get to a certain age, you go on doing things yourself, certainly—but there's an extra satisfaction in creating opportunities for younger people. And the Penguin operation seems to me to do exactly that, both in terms of selling good books cheaply—keeping prices down is a constant headache with us—and in terms of actually running the show.

"One of the things we're resigned to is a steady flow of younger people leaving us, because our pyramid of promotion simply can't accommodate all the talented young who get their training with us. But let me scotch any idea that there's been any sort of mass exodus from Penguin. A few conspicuous departures can create a very false impression.

"Naturally, there was a lot of speculation about what would happen after Allen Lane's death. No one man could then be both owner and chief executive. And when Penguin became part of the vast Pearson conglomerate I suppose it was natural that fears should be aroused. Well, if I didn't know better I should share those fears.

"I shouldn't have gone there as part of a strictly conventional, profit-maximising operation. And I should think Pearson's attitude was well enough illustrated by their appointment of Jim Rose as non-executive chairman of my board. I worked closely with him for three years during the war, and I know he couldn't lend himself to mere tycoonery. I suppose everybody knows his work for race relations, but of course music and literature have been a constant thread in his life, too—just after the war he was literary editor of the Observer.

"Some time or other, I dare say, Penguin are bound to embark on some project likely to cause uneasiness up in the parent company. Well, the final decision whether or not to publish rests absolutely with me. They can sack me, but they can't influence my decisions about the books we publish, the staff I appoint, or whatever. And I don't think for a moment they intend to.

"They have a right to demand efficiency across the board. But, for instance, nothing will deflect me from continuing to publish for minority interests: poetry and drama, for instance. And entertainment is a very important function: the wide range of what we call our orange list must be kept up—though not, I think, the total number of titles we publish, which has been growing too fast. Pelicans, I'm inclined to think—as one who's been an avid reader of them for years—have been getting a bit stodgy. The educational side must emphasise the excitement of learning things, just as the various juvenile lists set out to making reading a natural pleasure. And Allen Lane, our hardback imprint, is I'm sure on the verge of great things.

"I could talk for hours about all the assorted and exciting possibilities. What about the future of fiction, for instance? Half our non-fiction books are commissioned, but we don't publish original fiction. Shall we, one day? Not in my time perhaps—but I wonder whether the time won't come when fiction in hardback is only for writers who've made good, become established. I could also talk for hours about the exhilaration created by our basically young staffs.

"I suspect that Penguin pioneering has done a lot to stimulate the appearance of many other good paperback imprints, and that's all to the good. But with 4,000 titles in stock we have surely the widest range of any publisher of any kind. And—though it's difficult not to sound both hypocrital and priggish—I do believe we have a real social function, helping to make life more interesting and yes, well, richer. . . ."

Smiling rather diffidently, as though momentarily surprised and abashed by his own self-portrait, Peter Calvocoressi put his spectacles on again.

TIMES WED AUG [illegible]

Yalta legend

From Mr. Peter Calvocoressi

Sir,—Lord Gladwyn (August 24) says that anybody who believes that a nuclear Czechoslovakia would not have been invaded will believe anything. I believe it—perhaps not as dogmatically as Lord Gladwyn holds the opposite view but nevertheless strongly. I believe in other words that independence is ultimately incompatible with a less-than-modern armament. To that extent President de Gaulle is right. Just as he was right as a younger man to say that a country must have tanks rather than horses in order to defend itself, so he is right now when he says that it needs nuclear weapons.

It does not necessarily follow that lots of states will go nuclear because, as Mr. Alastair Buchan has reminded us, the technical and economic obstacles are still daunting. But so long as states continue to prize their independence, which they do, they will wish more than ever that they could go nuclear; and some, I imagine, will.

It has been supposed for two decades that the alternative to an independent nuclear armament is alliance with somebody else who has one; that "interdependence" is a kind of independence. There may be special cases in which this is true of special relationships for a restricted period, but as a general proposition about international life it seems to me untrue. An alliance of this kind is not an answer to the problem but a palliative—a pretence or hope that independence can be secured in one direction by sacrificing it in another. This may be a sensible—or inevitable—thing to do but so far from safeguarding independence it acknowledges its passing. It is a political acceptance of the psychologically unacceptable—as de Gaulle and others have embarrassingly pointed out.

In the absence of an effective collective security system, which we neither have nor look like having, the non-nuclear state cannot count on remaining independent. The case of Czechoslovakia is the roughest illustration we have yet of this proposition, and the clearest.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CALVOCORESSI.
Guise House, Aspley Guise, Bletchley,
Buckinghamshire.

ENDING THE NIG

5 JUL 69 TIMES

TIME TO ACT

From Mr. Peter Calvocoressi

Sir,—Your leading article of June 28 (A Policy of Famine) has rightly led to a great deal of comment and calls for action. Far too many people however are concerned to apportion blame. This is irrelevant at this moment of time.

What is indisputable is that widespread suffering and death from starvation are taking place. What is urgently needed is action from whatever source to alleviate this suffering.

The British Government's actions to date—and again we are not now concerned to apportion blame—have clearly not been enough. Its main leverage is, on its own showing, the supply of arms. But it is not the only supplier and is afraid to leave the field to others—in fact to the Russians.

What is unclear to the public is whether the British Government is doing enough to institute an international embargo on arms in order to bring the two sides to talks about their political future. Only by the most vigorous efforts in this direction will it be able to claim that it has discharged its obligation as a leading member of the Commonwealth and that it has done everything in its power to stop the fighting and the starving.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CALVOCORESSI, Chairman,
The Africa Bureau.
Derwent House, 2 Arundel Street,
W.C.2, July 4.

18/- NET

TIMES, SEPT. 26, 1968

DEMOCRACY IN GREECE

From Mr. Peter Calvocoressi

Sir,—You report (September 19) two Conservative M.P.s as praising the Greek junta for its progressive ideas and making Greece a happy and relaxed place. Such statements are irresponsible and cruel.

There are many relaxed and happy people in Greece, especially among those whom visitors see round and about. There are also thousands of people under arrest on account of nothing except their opinions. There is also torture, fully and horribly attested. Torture is not new in Greece but it does not cease to require condemnation because it has happened before. It ill behoves British politicians to praise the men who cause it.

But that is not the whole point, perhaps not the main one. The main point is that, once more, a new generation is growing up under a dictatorship and therefore ignorant of, and inexperienced in, more honest and more humane way of running a state. The view that the new constitution paves the way for democracy can only be held by people who have not read it. Apart from the fact that the Prime Minister has said that parts of it, including the provisions for elections, are not to be introduced "yet", the constitution gives the executive effective control over all aspects of Greek life, including the power arbitrarily to deprive individuals of the civil and human rights conferred on them by the constitution itself. Citizens in effect hold their rights at the pleasure of the executive.

The current trend on the right in this country, and more so in the United States, to whitewash the colonels and promote a coalition between them and the monarchy and Greek right wing politicians reflects a desire to push Greek fascism under the carpet and maintain a regime which preserves order of a kind and calls it law and order.

It is sad to see this crude and ill informed Realpolitik dressed up and commended in democratic terms.

Yours, &c.,
PETER CALVOCORESSI.
Guise House, Aspley Guise, Bletchley,
Buckinghamshire, Sept. 19.

18/.

-5. NOV. 1968
FALMER, BRIGHTON